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EXAMINER

ERB, NATHAN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3628

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/777,592

Applicant(s)

RYAN, FREDERICK W.

Examiner

NATHAN ERB

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 November 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2,4,7,9,11,14,16,18 and 22-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2,4,7,9,11,14,16,18 and 22-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/ are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
2. Applicant's response to Office action was received on November 14, 2007.
3. In response to applicant's amendment of the claims, all of the claim objections from the previous Office action are hereby withdrawn.
4. With respect to the prior art rejections of the claims, applicant argues that the prior art fails to disclose the element/limitation of "download graphic data to the selected postage metering system to be included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system." Examiner disagrees. This claim limitation is disclosed via a combination of disclosures from Hunter and Connell et al. Hunter discloses "wherein the data center initiates responsive action if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system." Connell et al. discloses "wherein the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system" and "wherein graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system." When these three disclosures are combined, the resulting element/limitation is "download graphic data to the selected postage metering system to be included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the

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empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system.”

(See the rejection of representative independent claim 2 below in this Office action for related citations and motivations to combine.) To paraphrase in order to explain the rejection in a more simple manner, Hunter detects potential fraud by keeping track of postage value added to a meter, as well as mail pieces from that meter that pass through the postal system. If the postage having been purchased for a meter differs too much from the amount of postage on mail pieces from that meter that have been mailed, this is an indication of potential postage fraud. When such fraud is detected, Hunter initiates a responsive action to deal with the situation. In Hunter, that responsive action is to initiate an investigation (see Hunter, column 5, lines 31-39). Of course, claim 1 requires that the responsive action be not an investigation, but a download of graphic data into a meter that gets incorporated onto mail pieces for the purpose of identifying mail pieces originating from suspect meter users. It is necessary to turn to Connell et al. for this portion of the claim limitation. Connell et al. is a postal security system that also functions in response to possible postal fraud (see Connell et al., column 1, lines 30-52). Connell et al. works by incorporating graphic data onto mail pieces that indicates whether or not the postage on the mail pieces is legitimate. At any given point in time, there is a particular item of graphic data that is designated as indicating that a mail piece's postage is valid. This designated graphic data changes periodically. In order to keep their "designated graphic data" up-to-date so that their mail pieces are indicated as having valid postage, meter users in Connell et al. must occasionally download the latest version of the designated graphic data. Individuals who are not authorized to be metering mail pieces will not have access to up-to-date designated graphic data, and thus will mail mail pieces with out-of-date graphic data that indicate the mail pieces as potentially

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fraudulent. Therefore, Connell et al. provides the needed disclosure of graphic data on mail pieces that is used to identify potentially fraudulent mail pieces in response to meter fraud concerns. Since the out-of-date graphic data used by a potentially fraudulent user was at one point up-to-date graphic data that was downloaded validly to that user, the out-of-date graphic data in Connell et al. that identifies potentially fraudulent data is disclosed as being downloaded to user meters. Therefore, the prior art does indeed disclose "download graphic data to the selected postage metering system to be included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system," and applicant's arguments are not persuasive with respect to this issue.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. Claims 2, 4, 9, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hunter, U.S. Patent No. 5,280,531, in view of Moore, U.S. Patent No. 5,917,925, in further view of Connell et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,933,849.

As per **Claim 2**, Hunter discloses:

- a mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces, the mail pieces having associated therewith respective mail piece data (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; system helps verify if mail pieces have valid indicia by detecting postal meter fraud; processes a stream of mail pieces; postage amount and meter identification number are mail piece data);

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- the data center including a plurality of account files corresponding to a plurality of postage metering systems (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; data center would be wherever the data processing system is located; account files include expenditure file and refill file; data center can hold information corresponding to a plurality of meters);

- the data center being adapted to store reset data in each of the plurality of account files representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; refill file contains such information; data center can hold information corresponding to a plurality of meters; reset data is stored in each of the account files that are representative of reset activity associated with the meters; reset data is stored in files that correspond to their respective meters);

- store empirical data in each of the plurality of account files representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; expenditure file contains such empirical data; data center can hold information corresponding to a plurality of meters; empirical data is stored in each of the account files that are representative of mailing activity associated with the meters; empirical data is stored in files that correspond to their respective meters);

- conduct a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24;

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column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; column 4, lines 53-68; column 5, lines 1-44; column 7, lines 1-7; forensic accounting analysis here is the comparison of postage purchased with postage used for the purpose of detecting potential mail fraud; empirical data here is in the expenditure file; reset data here is in the refill file; threshold may vary as a function of time; therefore, time period would need to be previously defined in order to determine threshold; analysis may be performed on a predetermined schedule);

- wherein the data center initiates responsive action if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 4, lines 26-42; column 5, lines 1-44).

Hunter fails to disclose a data center in operative communication with a plurality of mail processing centers. Moore discloses a data center in operative communication with a plurality of mail processing centers (column 9, line 59, through column 11, line 19; column 24, line 21, through column 25, line 17; data center here would be the location of the control computer; mail processing centers here would be the postal inspection stations). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter such that it includes a data center in operative communication with a plurality of mail processing centers, as disclosed by Moore. Motivation is provided by Moore in that having a data center in operative communication with a plurality of mail processing centers allows for the marking and tracking of mail pieces throughout the entire processing and delivery system (column 9, line 59, through column 11, line 19; column 24, line 21, through column 25, line 17).

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Hunter fails to disclose receiving respective mail piece data corresponding to the mail pieces from the plurality of mail processing centers. Moore discloses receiving respective mail piece data corresponding to the mail pieces from the plurality of mail processing centers (column 9, line 59, through column 11, line 19; column 24, line 21, through column 25, line 17; mail piece data here are scanned indicia; mail processing centers here would be the postal inspection stations). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified above in this rejection such that it receives respective mail piece data corresponding to the mail pieces from the plurality of mail processing centers, as disclosed by Moore. Motivation is provided by Moore in that receiving such mail piece data allows for the marking and tracking of mail pieces throughout the entire processing and delivery system (column 9, line 59, through column 11, line 19; column 24, line 21, through column 25, line 17).

Hunter and Moore fail to disclose wherein the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system. Connell et al. discloses wherein the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified above in this rejection such that the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system, as disclosed by Connell et al. Motivation is provided by Connell et al. in that requiring new graphic data helps differentiate authorized

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generators of indicia from unauthorized generators of indicia (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31).

Hunter and Moore fail to disclose wherein graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system. Connell et al. further discloses wherein graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system (column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified above in this rejection such that graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system, as disclosed by Connell et al. Motivation is provided by Connell et al. in that changing graphic data helps differentiate authorized generators of indicia from unauthorized generators of indicia (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31).

As per **Claim 4**, Hunter further discloses wherein the responsive action includes conducting an inspection of the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 4, lines 26-42; column 5, lines 1-44).

As per **Claim 9**, Hunter discloses:

- a method of operating a mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces, the mail pieces having associated therewith respective mail piece data (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; method helps verify if mail pieces have valid indicia by detecting postal meter fraud; processes a stream of mail pieces; postage amount and meter identification number are mail piece data);

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- obtaining the respective mail piece data from the mail pieces (column 2, lines 3-24; mail piece data here would include meter identification number);

- maintaining a plurality of account files corresponding to the plurality of postage metering systems (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; account files include expenditure file and refill file; reference's invention can hold information corresponding to a plurality of meters);

- storing reset data in each of the plurality of account files representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; refill file contains such information; reference's invention can hold information corresponding to a plurality of meters; reset data is stored in each of the account files that are representative of reset activity associated with the meters; reset data is stored in files that correspond to their respective meters);

- using the respective mail piece data, storing empirical data in each of the plurality of account files representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; mail piece data here would include meter identification number; mail piece data is used in that meter identification number identifies to what meter the mail piece's data pertains; expenditure file contains such empirical data; reference's invention can hold information corresponding to a plurality of meters; empirical data is stored in each of the account files that are representative of mailing activity associated with the meters; empirical data is stored in files that correspond to their respective meters);

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- conducting a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; column 4, lines 53-68; column 5, lines 1-44; column 7, lines 1-7; forensic accounting analysis here is the comparison of postage purchased with postage used for the purpose of detecting potential mail fraud; empirical data here is in the expenditure file; reset data here is in the refill file; threshold may vary as a function of time; therefore, time period would need to be previously defined in order to determine threshold; analysis may be performed on a predetermined schedule);

- initiating responsive action if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 4, lines 26-42; column 5, lines 1-44).

Hunter fails to disclose receiving mail pieces at a plurality of mail processing centers that have been prepared by a plurality of postage metering systems. Moore discloses receiving mail pieces at a plurality of mail processing centers that have been prepared by a plurality of postage metering systems (column 9, line 59, through column 11, line 19; column 24, line 21, through column 25, line 17; mail processing centers here would be the postal inspection stations). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter such that it receives mail pieces at a plurality of mail processing centers that have been prepared by a plurality of postage metering systems, as disclosed by Moore. Motivation is provided by Moore in that receiving such mail pieces at a plurality of mail processing centers allows for the marking and tracking of mail pieces throughout the entire

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processing and delivery system (column 9, line 59, through column 11, line 19; column 24, line 21, through column 25, line 17).

Hunter and Moore fail to disclose wherein the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system. Connell et al. discloses wherein the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified above in this rejection such that the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system, as disclosed by Connell et al. Motivation is provided by Connell et al. in that requiring new graphic data helps differentiate authorized generators of indicia from unauthorized generators of indicia (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31).

Hunter and Moore fail to disclose wherein graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system. Connell et al. further discloses wherein graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system (column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified above in this rejection such that graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system, as disclosed by Connell et al. Motivation is provided by Connell et al. in that changing graphic data

helps differentiate authorized generators of indicia from unauthorized generators of indicia (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31).

As per **Claim 11**, Hunter further discloses wherein the responsive action includes conducting an inspection of the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 4, lines 26-42; column 5, lines 1-44).

6. Claims 7 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hunter in view of Moore in further view of Connell et al. in further view of Berson et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,819,239.

As per **Claim 7**, Hunter, Moore, and Connell et al. fail to disclose wherein the responsive action includes issuing instructions to increase a sample rate for mail pieces including mail piece data corresponding to the selected postage metering system. Berson et al. discloses wherein the responsive action includes issuing instructions to increase a sample rate for mail pieces including mail piece data corresponding to the selected postage metering system (column 8, line 60, through column 9, line 5; column 9, line 29, through column 11, line 59; an audit here would involve an increased sample rate, a higher level of inspection). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified in the rejection for claim 2 such that the responsive action includes issuing instructions to increase a sample rate for mail pieces including mail piece data corresponding to the selected postage metering system, as disclosed by Berson et al. Motivation is provided by Berson et al. in that performing an audit in response to initial sampling data allows for review of

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a mailer's accounts when there is some indication of a need for such an audit (column 8, line 60, through column 9, line 5; column 9, line 29, through column 11, line 59).

As per **Claim 14**, Hunter, Moore, and Connell et al. fail to disclose increasing a sample rate for mail pieces including mail piece data corresponding to the selected postage metering system. Berson et al. discloses increasing a sample rate for mail pieces including mail piece data corresponding to the selected postage metering system (column 8, line 60, through column 9, line 5; column 9, line 29, through column 11, line 59; an audit here would involve an increased sample rate, a higher level of inspection). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified in the rejection for claim 9 such that it increases a sample rate for mail pieces including mail piece data corresponding to the selected postage metering system, as disclosed by Berson et al. Motivation is provided by Berson et al. in that performing an audit in response to initial sampling data allows for review of a mailer's accounts when there is some indication of a need for such an audit (column 8, line 60, through column 9, line 5; column 9, line 29, through column 11, line 59).

7. Claims 16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hunter in view of Connell et al.

As per **Claim 16**, Hunter discloses:

- a method of operating a data center for processing data associated with mail pieces and a plurality of postage metering systems for preparing mail pieces (column 1, lines 51-68; column

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2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; data center would be wherever the data processing system is located; processes data associated with mail pieces, such as meter identification number; reference's invention can process information corresponding to a plurality of meters);

- obtaining reset data representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; reset data here is in the refill file; reference's invention can process information corresponding to a plurality of meters);

- obtaining empirical data representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; empirical data here is in the expenditure file; reference's invention can process information corresponding to a plurality of meters);

- conducting a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42; column 4, lines 53-68; column 5, lines 1-44; column 7, lines 1-7; forensic accounting analysis here is the comparison of postage purchased with postage used for the purpose of detecting potential mail fraud; empirical data here is in the expenditure file; reset data here is in the refill file; threshold may vary as a function of time; therefore, time period would need to be previously defined in order to determine threshold; analysis may be performed on a predetermined schedule);

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- initiating responsive action if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 4, lines 26-42; column 5, lines 1-44).

Hunter fails to disclose wherein the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system. Connell et al. discloses wherein the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter such that the responsive action includes including graphic data in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system, as disclosed by Connell et al. Motivation is provided by Connell et al. in that requiring new graphic data helps differentiate authorized generators of indicia from unauthorized generators of indicia (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31).

Hunter fails to disclose wherein graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system. Connell et al. further discloses wherein graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system (column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified above in this rejection such that graphic change information is downloaded to the selected postage metering system, as disclosed by Connell et al. Motivation is provided by Connell et al. in that changing graphic data

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helps differentiate authorized generators of indicia from unauthorized generators of indicia (column 1, lines 30-52; column 5, line 21, through column 6, line 31).

As per **Claim 18**, Hunter further discloses wherein the responsive action includes conducting an inspection of the selected postage metering system (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 4, lines 26-42; column 5, lines 1-44).

8. Claims 22-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hunter in view of Moore in further view of Connell et al. in further view of Fleming, U.S. Patent No. 5,953,710.

As per **Claim 22**, Hunter further discloses the selected postage metering system having a serial number (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42). Hunter, Moore, and Connell et al. fail to disclose wherein the responsive action includes issuing a new identification number to replace an existing identification number. Fleming discloses wherein the responsive action includes issuing a new identification number to replace an existing identification number (column 5, line 63, through column 6, line 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified in the invention for claim 2 such that the responsive action includes issuing a new identification number to replace an existing identification number, as disclosed by Fleming. Motivation is provided in that it was well-known to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention that changing

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an identification number can help prevent fraud associated with the original identification number.

As per **Claim 23**, Hunter further discloses:

- the selected postage metering system having a serial number (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42);
- wherein the mail pieces contain serial numbers (column 2, lines 3-24).

Hunter, Moore, and Connell et al. fail to disclose issuing a new identification number to replace an existing identification number, allowing normal processing of items associated with the new identification number, and instructing the plurality of processing centers to withhold processing of items associated with the existing identification number. Fleming discloses issuing a new identification number to replace an existing identification number, allowing normal processing of items associated with the new identification number, and instructing the plurality of processing centers to withhold processing of items associated with the existing identification number (column 5, line 63, through column 6, line 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified in the rejection for claim 9 such that it issues a new identification number to replace an existing identification number, allows normal processing of items associated with the new identification number, and instructs the plurality of processing centers to withhold processing of items associated with the existing identification number, as disclosed by Fleming. Motivation is provided in the it was well-known to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's

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invention that changing an identification number can help prevent fraud associated with the original identification number.

9. Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hunter in view of Connell et al. in further view of Fleming.

As per **Claim 24**, Hunter further discloses:

- the selected postage metering system having a serial number (column 1, lines 51-68; column 2, lines 3-24; column 3, line 49, through column 4, line 17; column 4, lines 26-42);
- wherein the mail pieces contain serial numbers (column 2, lines 3-24).

Hunter and Connell et al. fail to disclose issuing a new identification number to replace an existing identification number, providing instructions to allow normal processing of items associated with the new identification number, and providing instructions to withhold processing of items associated with the existing identification number. Fleming discloses issuing a new identification number to replace an existing identification number, providing instructions to allow normal processing of items associated with the new identification number, and providing instructions to withhold processing of items associated with the existing identification number (column 5, line 63, through column 6, line 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the invention of Hunter as modified in the rejection for claim 16 such that it issues a new identification number to replace an existing identification number, provides instructions to allow normal processing of items associated with the new identification number, and provides instructions to withhold processing of items associated with the existing identification number, as disclosed by Fleming. Motivation is

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provided in that it was well-known to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention that changing an identification number can help prevent fraud associated with the original identification number.

Conclusion

10. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

11. **Examiner's Note:** Examiner has cited particular portions of the references as applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested that the applicant, in preparing the responses, fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

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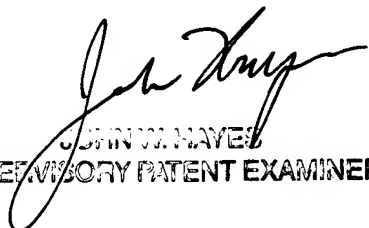
12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nathan Erb whose telephone number is (571) 272-7606. The examiner can normally be reached on Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 AM to 5 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571) 272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Nathan Erb
Examiner
Art Unit 3628

nhe


JOHN W. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER